



AORN AND MERCY SHIPS COLLABORATE TO INCREASE PATIENT CARE ABOARD HOSPITAL SHIPS

High Level of Volunteer Participation is Expected From Perioperative Nurse Professionals

Chicago, Illinois, March 19, 2009, Patrick Voight, president of the Association of periOperative Registered Nurses (AORN), today announced to more than 5000 attendees at its 56th annual Congress that AORN has entered into a collaboration with Mercy Ships, the operator of the world's largest non-governmental hospital ship, the *Africa Mercy*.

Through the collaboration, the RN membership of AORN will be invited to volunteer their operating room training and skills in six state-of-the-art operating rooms on the *Africa Mercy* by providing surgical support and health care in African nations.

Mercy Ships supports the mission of AORN which is to promote safety and optimal outcomes for patients undergoing operative and other invasive procedures by providing practice support and professional development opportunities to perioperative nurses. "This important collaboration enables our members to share their knowledge and expertise at the international level, caring for populations that might not otherwise have access to safe and professional help," said Voight.

Mercy Ships relies on volunteer medical professionals to fulfill its mission of bringing hope and healing to the world's forgotten poor. Approximately 150-200 operating room nurses are needed annually to serve the 5400 patients that receive operations onboard the ship. "We rely on the expertise, knowledge and skills of our qualified volunteers.

The perioperative nurse professionals of AORN are an excellent resource of expert nurses to help us provide the high standard of care that we deliver to all patients onboard the *Africa Mercy*," stated Sam Smith, CEO of Mercy Ships.

AORN

AORN, Inc., the Association of periOperative Registered Nurses, represents more than 42,000 perioperative professionals in the U.S. and abroad who facilitate the management, teaching and practice of perioperative nursing, or who are enrolled in nursing education or engaged in perioperative research. Its members also include perioperative nurses who work in related business and industry sectors. AORN's mission is to promote safety and optimal outcomes for patients undergoing operative and other invasive procedures by providing practice support and professional development opportunities to perioperative nurses. AORN will collaborate with professional and regulatory organizations, industry leaders, and other healthcare partners who support the mission. www.aorn.org

Mercy Ships

Mercy Ships (www.mercyships.org) is the leader in using hospital ships to deliver free, world-class health care services to the poor. Founded in 1978 by Don and Deyon Stephens, Mercy Ships brings hope and healing to the poor in developing nations. Over the past 30 years, Mercy Ships has worked in more than 70 countries providing services valued at more than \$670 million, directly impacting more than 1.9

million people. More than 850 crew worldwide, representing more than 35 nations, are joined each year by hundreds of short-term volunteers. Professionals including surgeons, dentists, nurses, community developers, teachers, cooks, seamen, engineers, and agriculturalists donate their time and skills to the effort.

For more information, click on www.mercyships.org. Hi-res photos and general Mercy Ships broadcast footage clips are available for download at www.mercyshipsnews.org or upon request.